



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL  
TRAINING COMMAND  
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QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5033

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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**MAR 16 2018**

From: Commanding Officer, Officer Candidates School  
To: Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Educational Program and Enlisted Commissioning Program Selectees  
Subj: SUMMER 2018 OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL PREPARATION GUIDANCE FOR ENLISTED TO OFFICER CANDIDATES  
Ref: (a) NAVMC 3500.18C (Chapter 4)

1. Congratulations on your selection to attend Officer Candidates School (OCS). The intent of this letter is to provide a framework for your preparation in order to allow you to excel at OCS. In addition to the information presented in this letter, reference (a) provides additional insight on itemized training standards and events designed to ensure candidates have the moral, intellectual, and physical qualities required for commissioning.

2. Leadership. At 50% of your grade, leadership is the most important part of the evaluation process. While there is no one single leadership style required for success, you need to come to OCS prepared to practice good selfless-leadership and to tactfully interact with your peers. The three areas evaluated during leadership events are decision making, communication, and your ability to generate action through leading your subordinates. We recommend you practice leading your fellow Marines and asking for honest, candid feedback on these three components.

a. One of the main stumbling blocks for enlisted to officer candidates is humility. You need to prepare yourself to be a candidate, not a Sergeant or Staff Sergeant of Marines. Your peers will look to you for guidance and leadership based off of your knowledge and experience but will quickly tune you out if you come off as arrogant.

b. Integrity is constantly evaluated at OCS. You must understand that your actions here, just as anywhere in the Marine Corps, should be above reproach. Be honest in all of your actions at OCS and avoid bringing your character into question.

3. Academics. Academics makes up 25% of your grade, and is written and tested at the 10th grade level. Exams are conducted with varied amounts of sleep and study time, and therefore, are more difficult than you would expect. You should focus on general military knowledge, Marine Corps history, test taking skills, and the following areas:

a. OCS is entry level training, and focuses on leadership and basic Marine knowledge. You should have an understanding of the Leadership Traits and Principles, the 11 General Orders, and basic weapons handling.

b. 5-Paragraph Order. You should be familiar with the 5-paragraph order. You should be able to draft a skeleton 5-paragraph order, receive a basic order, and issue an order to a subordinate (fire team or squad) unit in a compressed amount of time.

c. Land Navigation. You should be able to determine an azimuth and back azimuth, plot points on a map, and navigate using a lensatic compass. Having a basic knowledge of land navigation will pay dividends during land navigation events and field training events.

4. Physical Fitness. Physical Fitness composes 25% of your grade, and sets the foundation for many of the tested events. You need to be in good overall shape and able to maintain a high level of output over the 10 week course. Recommended pre-OCS physical fitness preparation is as follows:

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a. PT in boots. You should be able to run in boots and utilities as easily as green on green and go-fasters; the major PT events here at OCS are in boots and utilities with LBV, two canteens, and a rifle. It is highly recommended that you get comfortable running with this equipment for a minimum distance of three miles.

b. Pull-ups. The ability to do pull-ups will help with normal PT, the Obstacle Course, and Endurance Course. A recommended minimum for female candidates is three pull-ups. All candidates must pass the Endurance Course in order to graduate, and these events require dynamic upper body strength similar to what is required to do a pull up.

c. Hiking. Candidates will conduct an introductory 3 mile individual movement. Additionally, candidates will conduct 4 mile, 6 mile, and 9.3 mile unit conditioning hikes and numerous administrative moves. The load carried will range from 45-55 pounds and be at an average pace no faster than 3.6 miles per hour. If you have not been hiking often, it is recommended that you work up to hiking four miles in 50-60 minutes with a 45 pound pack.

5. Mentorship. You are encouraged to seek out a company grade officer, who displays excellent leadership, and utilize that officer as a mentor during your preparation. As a recent OCS and The Basic School graduate, a company grade officer will be the best suited to focus your preparation on the skill sets you need to excel here.

6. Please refer to the OCS website for additional information, <http://www.trngcmd.marines.mil/Units/Northeast/Officer-Candidates-School/>. For any further assistance please contact Coordinator of Student Activities, Captain Ben Wearing at [ocs\\_csa@usmc.mil](mailto:ocs_csa@usmc.mil) or 703-784-3223.



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